

Olde Town Plan





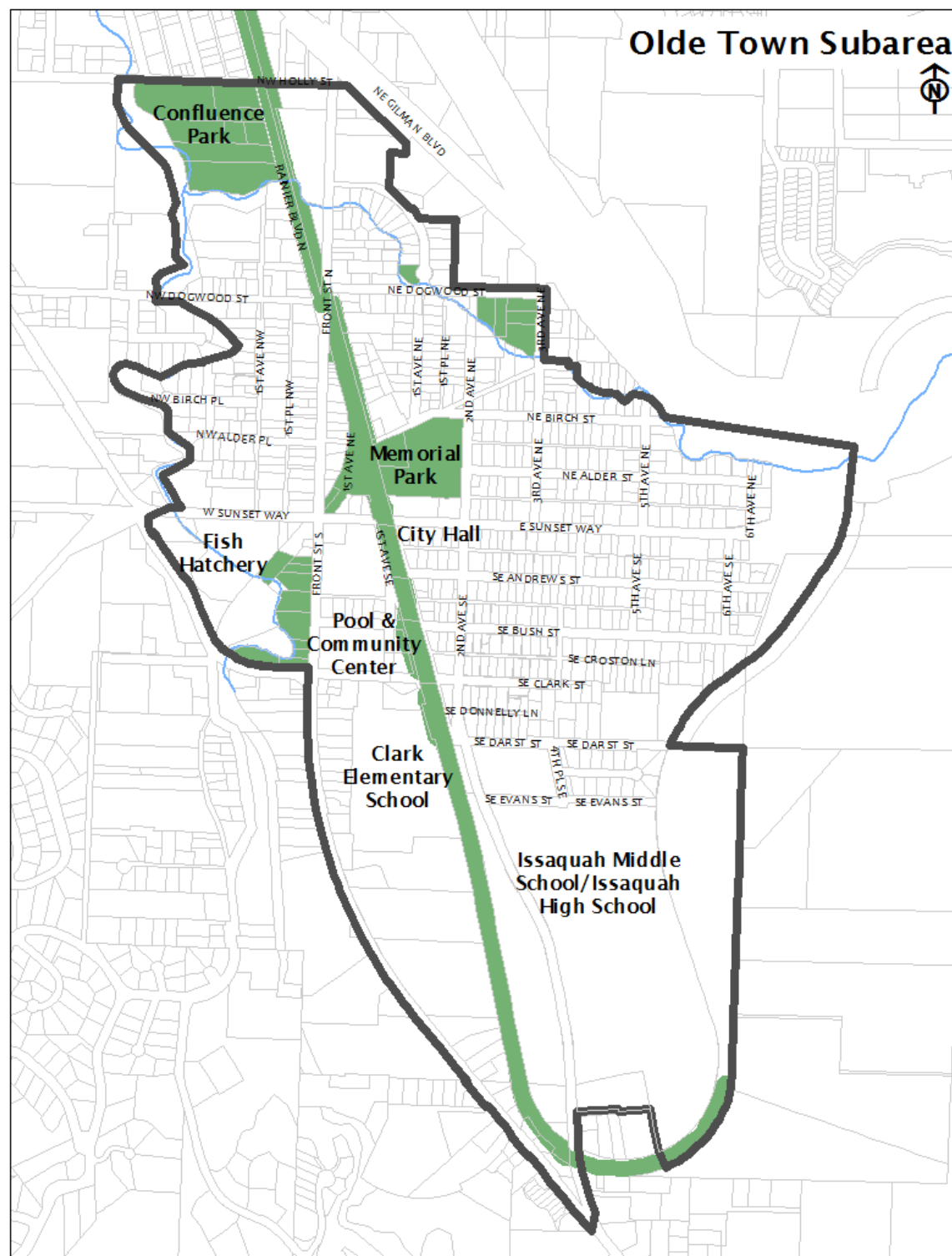
Adopted November 19, 2018
Ordinance #2849

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CREDITS

Many thanks to the many contributors to this plan update including: Mayor and City Council, Planning Policy Commission, the Olde Town Task Force and the Community.



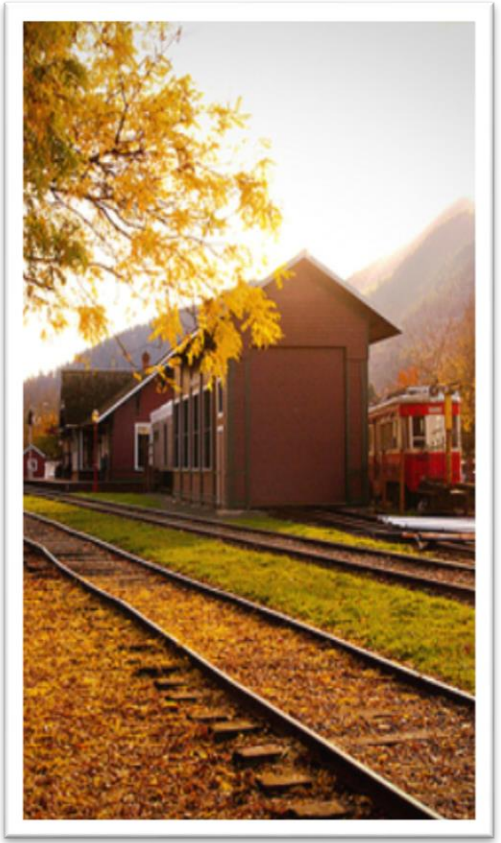
QUALITY OF LIFE

Truly great neighborhoods are those that are organic; those that have evolved and grown over time into places where people want to live, work and visit. Great neighborhoods contain architecture and places that are visually interesting, memorable and distinct. They provide daily services as well as cultural and civic events, all of which are safely and comfortably accessible by foot, bike, car or transit. Great neighborhoods inspire community engagement and interaction which is driven by the many and varied people that inhabit or work in this place, as well as by those who gather and socialize within the neighborhood. Convivial, lively and enjoyable neighborhoods provide the gathering places: the coffee shops, pubs, ice cream shops, churches, clubhouses, parks, front yards, street fairs, block parties, living rooms, back yards, stoops, restaurants and plazas that connect people.

When many visitors think of Issaquah, the Olde Town neighborhood is likely the first image that comes to mind. For the Olde Town neighborhood – a neighborhood that pre-dates the suburban, car-oriented form of other parts of the City – the challenge is to preserve its tight-knit feel, small-town charm and authenticity while the City at large is growing in the Villages and Central Issaquah subarea.

Through this neighborhood plan update process, many issues have been identified that may jeopardize the continued vibrancy and high quality of life currently experienced in this part of the City. This plan update identifies those threats and provides actions aimed at minimizing their negative impact on Olde Town.

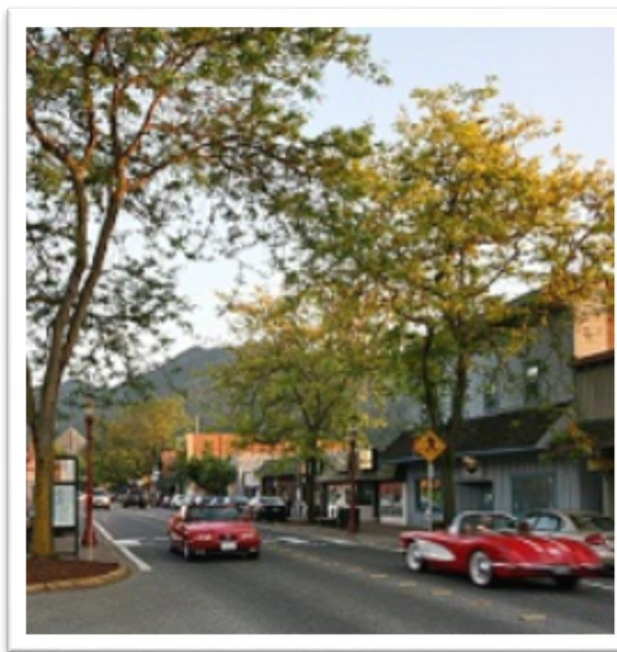
1. Regional traffic caused by growth outside of Issaquah increases congestion on Front St and Sunset Way
2. Parking in many areas is inefficient and, therefore, detrimental to Olde Town businesses
3. Current development regulations (both residential and CBD) have allowed, and could continue to allow, development at a scale and character that is out-of-step with the neighborhood vision
4. Vehicular traffic passing through Olde Town is worse than it has ever been
5. Business owners believe development codes (e.g. impervious limits and parking requirements) are a hinderance to commercial development
6. Pedestrian and bicycles are not prioritized over vehicles
7. People spaces are not as usable as they could be (e.g. area behind Stan's, next to Village Theater, etc.)
8. Connection to Issaquah Creek has not been prioritized
9. Convenient availability of goods and services such as a fresh food grocery store is missing.



OLDE TOWN VISION

Olde Town Issaquah Will Be...

- A complete neighborhood where businesses are viable and provide daily services to those who live and work here
- A safe, diverse and welcoming neighborhood
- A vibrant, attractive regional destination comprised of small scale, traditional architecture
- Easily, safely and comfortably traveled by car, bus, bicycle or foot
- Comprised of distinctive, well used gathering places and spaces
- A place to connect with our environment, cultural and civic interests, and historic roots
- A place where views of the surrounding mountains is prominent
- The historic downtown of our City



PLAN FRAMEWORK

This Plan is an update of the existing Olde Town Subarea Plan adopted by the City Council on September 20, 1999. The Olde Town Plan is nearing 20 years old. There remain challenges in the neighborhood that require focused attention. The area's desirability has driven up housing prices to the point where housing is not affordable for many people. Limited parking availability, missing sidewalks and bike routes, and regional traffic threaten the ease of mobility through this area. As the community grows, adequate transportation access, community services, and open space become increasingly critical. This plan addresses opportunities for this neighborhood in five distinct areas: **Community, Connectivity & Mobility, Environment, Economic Vitality, and Housing**. Each contains Goals and Policies aimed at providing the direction needed for clear actions to be taken by the City.

This plan creates a roadmap for the City and the community to work on the existing threats to this neighborhood, turning them into strengths. The plan's focus is on maintaining the existing fabric that has remained the center of the City for decades; and, taking proactive and deliberate steps to improve the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors to Olde Town.

Goal A. Placemaking. Create inviting, identifiable, and desirably aesthetic civic and cultural gathering places that inspire community engagement.

- 1.1 Implement public improvements, including the 2017 Downtown Streetscape Concept Plan, to create new opportunities for people to “hang out”, encourage community activities and improve opportunities for neighbors to meet.
- 1.2 Design Gateway features to mark north, south, east and west entrances to Olde Town when public and private redevelopment opportunities occur.
- 1.3 Use art and Wayfinding to showcase neighborhood amenities.
- 1.4 Support, promote and facilitate the special events that occur in this neighborhood that distinguish it from other parts of the City.
- 1.5 Formally recognize the abundant Issaquah Treasures ([Comprehensive Plan, Volume 2, Land Use, Appendix 1](#)) located in Olde Town.
- 1.6 Incorporate additional lighting into public gathering spaces, sidewalks and trails to increase comfort and safety.
- 1.7 Partner with property owners, businesses, the Downtown Issaquah Association and service providers to consolidate amenities such as garbage and parking.
- 1.8 Facilitate the active use of sidewalks by area businesses to increase accessibility to businesses and encourage interactivity between ground floor retail uses and the sidewalk.

Goal B. Green Necklace. Continue the Green Necklace through Olde Town by way of a concentrated and connected park, green space and nonmotorized system.

- 1.9 Add to and enhance Olde Town’s park, open space and trail system in a way that implements the vision and needs of those living in, working in, and visiting Olde Town. Implement this vision through the Parks Strategic Plan including connected trails, Memorial Field, Pedestrian Park, Front Street (north of Newport Way) properties, Confluence Park, Downtown Streetscape Concept Plan plazas and parks.

Goal C. Traditional Building Character. Maintain the traditional character and scale of the Cultural and Business District and Sunset neighborhoods while allowing these areas to grow and evolve.

- 1.10 Update the Cultural and Business District development and architectural standards consistent with the existing scale and traditional, “Main Street”, mixed use character.
- 1.11 Update the Multifamily - High development and architectural standards (along E Sunset Way) to ensure infill and redevelopment remain consistent with the existing scale and traditional multifamily and small business character.

Goal D. Neighborhood Ownership. Engage Olde Town residents and business owners in the implementation of this Neighborhood Plan.

- 1.12 Establish a regular and recurring community forum with Olde Town residents, property and business owners to promote City/neighborhood familiarity and interaction.



Goal E. Balanced Transportation Network. Support the placemaking vision and character of Olde Town by developing a safe, efficient, and effective multimodal transportation network that prioritizes pedestrians and bicyclists.

Goal F. Traffic. Invest in improvements to manage both regional and local traffic.

Goal G. Parking. Improve parking availability for businesses, visitors and residents.

- 2.1 Prioritize pedestrian facilities in all public and private development by connecting trail and sidewalk gaps, adopting pedestrian-oriented development standards, and prioritizing pedestrian-facility funding in all publicly-funded projects.
- 2.2 Provide and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections within Olde Town and to neighboring areas and amenities accessible from Olde Town including trails, trailheads, neighborhoods and parks by adding crosswalks and missing non-motorized improvements.
- 2.3 Work with the Downtown Issaquah Association and Olde Town businesses to add weather protection to the building facades on Front Street to support a year-round environment for pedestrians.
- 2.4 Prioritize cyclists by creating a connected and intuitive bicycle network that completes neighborhood connections and connections to regional routes.
- 2.5 Facilitate mobility options, such as the shopping shuttle to improve mobility options for Olde Town.
- 2.6 Work with King County Metro, Sound Transit and other service providers to add routes, increase frequency of service, and increase service options in and around Olde Town.
- 2.7 Monitor the recently implemented neighborhood traffic calming measures that discourage cut-through traffic and make improvements, as necessary.
- 2.8 Strive for the Mobility Master Plan to identify efforts aimed at minimizing the negative impacts of regional traffic to Front Street and Sunset Way.
- 2.9 Employ parking management strategies based on the results of the 2018-2019 parking analysis that ensure on-street and public parking is efficiently and effectively utilized to meet various needs in Issaquah.
- 2.10 Amend parking code requirements that make businesses in the Cultural Business District competitive with other areas of the City.

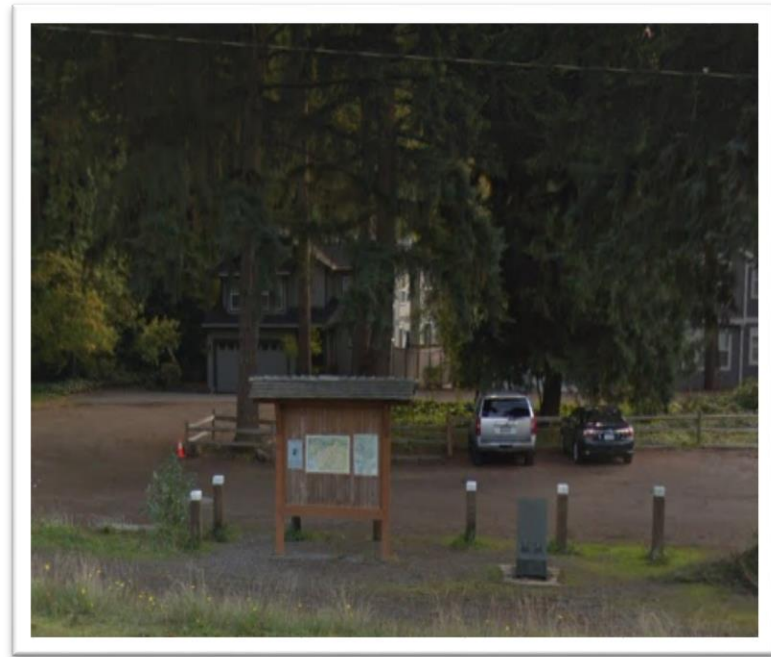


Goal H. Natural Environment. Enrich Olde Town by retaining and enhancing connections, both visual and physical, to the natural environment.

- 3.1 Update the Olde Town Design Standards to require greenery that benefits the public realm through measures such as green facades, living walls and landscape walls.
- 3.2 Use limited building heights for new and redevelopment to better preserve views of the Issaquah Alps and Mt. Rainier from NE Gilman Blvd, Rainier Blvd N, E Sunset Way, W Sunset Way, Front St N and Front St S.
- 3.3 Implement recommendations from the Issaquah Parks Strategic Plan including interim and/or long term improvements to trails, Memorial Field, Pedestrian Park, Front Street South (north of Newport Way) properties, and Confluence Park.
- 3.4 Improve public access to and views of Issaquah Creek and the East Fork of Issaquah Creek within Olde Town.
- 3.5 Repurpose underutilized open spaces within Olde Town as part of an integrated park system.
- 3.6 Replace aging trees, plant street trees and trees within open spaces to add to the tree canopy.

Goal I. Sustainability. Protect and contribute to the enhancement of Olde Town's natural amenities through sustainable practices.

- 3.7 Encourage public and private investment in solar energy to take advantage of the good solar access in Olde Town.
- 3.8 Locate and install electric vehicle charging stations for vehicles of workers, residents and visitors, in public and private developments.
- 3.9 Develop an opportunity for an Olde Town Community Garden.



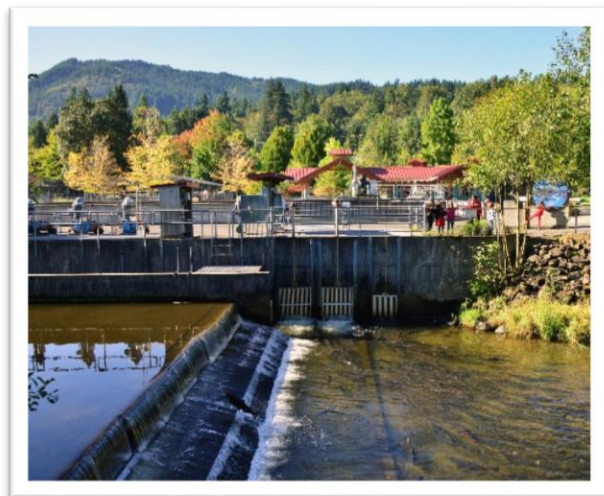
Goal J. Business Retention and Attraction.

Promote Olde Town as a vibrant neighborhood business opportunity.

- 4.1 Attract businesses that provide goods and services for the everyday needs of Olde Town residents, businesses and visitors.
- 4.2 Encourage opportunities for retail in Olde Town, including pop-up and non-traditional retail ventures.
- 4.3 Implement Code revisions that allow Olde Town businesses to be competitive with other Issaquah business/retail spaces.
- 4.4 Retain and enhance the vitality of the historic shopping core of the City through zoning code updates that prioritize: a) local businesses, neighborhood-serving retail, grocery, and restaurant uses; and, b) the conversion of larger, auto-oriented commercial spaces into Main Street compatible developments.

Goal K. Arts & Culture Hub. Promote Olde Town as the community's arts and cultural center for residents, the business community, and visitors.

- 4.5 Strengthen and support partnerships with providers of visual and performing arts in Olde Town to encourage and promote robust arts, history and cultural opportunities.
- 4.6 Support Village Theater.
- 4.7 Explore Code limitations to break down barriers for live/work/studio opportunities.
- 4.8 Support Visit Issaquah and the Downtown Issaquah Association to market historic downtown Issaquah and its recreational and entrepreneurial opportunities as a tourist destination.
- 4.9 Facilitate community events and block parties.



Goal L. Preserve Residential Neighborhoods. Preserve the scale and character of the residential neighborhoods while ensuring a variety of housing that meets community needs.

- 5.1 Adopt architectural standards and updated development standards consistent with the character and style of existing residences.
- 5.2 Reduce allowable heights in higher density areas to maintain the character and scale of the residential neighborhoods.

Goal M. Increase housing types. Increase variety of housing types in Olde Town.

- 5.3 Encourage the provision of various housing options in Olde Town including senior housing, artists' lofts, Accessory Dwelling Units, etc.
- 5.4 Retain and increase the supply of housing in Olde Town by implementing the Housing Strategy Work Plan.



IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (2019 – 2020)

1. New Architectural Standards and Design Guidelines in CBD, MF-H (E. Sunset Way only), SF-D zones.
2. Code revisions to reduce heights to 3 stories in CBD; 3 stories in MF-H (E. Sunset Way only); 2 stories in SF-D.
3. Code revisions to increase impervious surface in CBD to 95% and adopt new landscape standards; increase impervious in MF-H (E. Sunset Way only) to 75% and adopt new landscape standards.
4. Code revisions to require ground floor commercial on Front Street;
5. Code revisions to allow small-scale retail in MF-H (E. Sunset Way only);
6. Code revisions to remove Olde Town parcels as Transfer of Development Receiving Sites (CBD, MF-M and MF-H);
7. Parking analysis to increase public parking availability and update private parking requirements for new development.
8. Work with King County Metro, Sound Transit and other service providers to add routes, increase frequency of service, and increase service options.
9. Implement improvements that discourage cut-through traffic in neighborhoods (follow through from 2017 temporary measures).
10. Market historic downtown Issaquah and support Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA).
11. Prepare an inventory of missing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and look to increase crosswalks and connectivity.
12. Fund and build the remaining portion of Phase I, (Front Street, Sunset to Alder), Phase III (Front Street, Alder to Dogwood) and Front Street, Dogwood to Gilman, of the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Plan.
13. Collaborate with the Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA) to identify funding for and implement the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Plan.
14. Replace Front Street street trees in accordance with the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Plan.
15. Develop incentives that reduce parking requirements for neighborhood-oriented commercial projects.
16. Code revisions to expand the Sidewalk Use District (IMC 12.05) to Olde Town to afford Olde Town businesses the same predictability that was given to retailers in the Highlands and Rowley.
17. Review the Olde Town Boundaries within 12 months of adoption of new Architectural Standards and Design guidelines.
18. Amend the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Plan to require lighting and utility poles be consistent with Olde Town character.
19. Promote the Sustainable Building Action Plan Strategies including solar energy systems with applicants during the permit process.



SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (2021 – 2022)

1. Continue implementing, in partnership with DIA, recommendations from the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Plan.
2. Add pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements to the Capital Improvement Plan.
3. Implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements (e.g. complete the gaps; improve lighting, wayfinding and weather protection; plant street trees).
4. Implement parking analysis recommendations.
5. Develop Olde Town Community Engagement Program.
6. Create and adopt Neighborhood Redevelopment Infill Toolkit.
7. Develop and implement Wayfinding measures, that are consistent with the City's Wayfinding Plan.
8. Install electric vehicle charging stations.
9. Create an Olde Town Community Garden.
10. Fund and build Phase II (Alder Festival Street) and remaining future phases of the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Plan.
11. Create streamlined City process to allow Olde Town street closures to facilitate neighborhood and community events.
12. Review and update the Olde Town Subarea Plan within 12 months of adoption of new Architectural Standards and Design guidelines.
13. Amend codes to establish new Sustainable Design Criteria regarding solar energy, where possible.



LONGER-TERM ACTIONS (2023 – 2030)

1. Implement recommendations from the Issaquah Parks Strategic Plan that may include connected improvements to trails, Memorial Field, Pedestrian Park, Front Street South (north of Newport Way) properties, and Confluence Park.
2. Continue implementing, in partnership with DIA, recommendations from the Downtown Streetscape Conceptual Plan.
3. Improve public access to and views of Issaquah Creek and the East Fork of Issaquah Creek.
4. Increase mobility options such as the shopping shuttle and out-of-area parking to improve mobility options for Olde Town.

